

Message Text

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41

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4000

UNCLAS ATHENS 4156

EO 11652 NA

TAGS ETRD GR

SUBJ: CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY: REQUEST FOR TAX EXEMPTION ON CERTAIN MOTOR

VEHICLE IMPORTS INTO GREECE BY CHURCH GROUPS

REF (A) STATE 99890, (B) STATE 101523

1. FOLL IS SUBSTANTIVE TEXT OF SUGGESTED REPLY TO CONGRESSMAN BURLESON AND SENATOR ALLEN'S LTRS: GREECE IMPOSES HEAVY BURDENS ON THE IMPORT OF MOTOR VEHICLES. THESE BURDENS INCLUDE DUTIES, OTHER IMPORT TAXES LEVIED SPECIFICALLY ON MOTOR VEHICLES, AND A MONTHLY CIRCULATION TAX. GENERALLY, THESE TAXES AND DUTIES ARE BASED ON (1) CIF. VALUE. (2) ENGINE DISPLACEMENT, (3) HORSE POWER, (4) AGE, AND (5) SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE VEHICLE. IN ANY EVENT, IT IS QUITE TRUE THAT THE IMPORT OF A NEW VAN WOULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE..

2. EXEMPTIONS TO THE PAYMENT OF THESE DUTIES AND TAXES BY RESIDENTS OF GREECE ARE ENJOYED BY MEMBERS OF CERTAIN GROUPS INCLUDING DIPLOMATS, OFFICIALS OF CERTAIN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MEMBERS OF US ARMED FORCES STATIONED HERE UNDER THE STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT WITH GREECE, AND EMPLOYEES OF CERTAIN REGIONAL FOREIGN COMPANIES ESTABLISHED UNDER GREEK LAW 89, WHO ARE EXEMPTED FROM THE PAYMENT OF IMPORT TAXES AND DUTIES ONLY (NOT FROM CIRCULATION TAXES).

3. WHILE THE EMBASSY IS AWARE OF THIS PROBLEM AS IT CONCERN AMERICAN CHURCH GROUPS, WE HAVE NO LEGAL GROUNDS FOR INTERVENTION. HOWEVER, IF MR. DUMAS WISHES, HE MAY APPLY FOR TAX FREE STATUS TO THE GREEK CUSTOMS WITH DATA CONCERNING HIS VEHICLE, IE PROPOSED DATE OF SHIPMENT AND ARRIVAL IN GREECE, FOB COST,
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DISPLACEMENT, HORSE POWER.

4. FYI: A TOURIST MAY FREELY CIRCUALTE HIS POV IN GREECE FOR UP TO ONE FULL YEAR BEFORE RBAD TAXES BECOME PAYABLE AND TWO YEARS BEFORE PAYMENT OF CUSTOMS AND IMPORT DUTIES AND REGISTRATION WITH THE GREEK AUTHORITIES BECOMES MANDATORY. IF POV IS RE-EXPORTED WITHIN THIS PERIOD, NO TAXES OR DUTIES ARE PAYABLE.
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Message Attributes

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